Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the

application:

Listing of Claims:

1–43. (Cancelled)

44. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message

having a sender address~~and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses~~, the

method comprising establishing a test connection to an authorized mailhost for ~~determining~~

~~whether~~ the sender address ~~exists at an authorized mailhost for a domain of the sender address~~

~~without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address~~, sending a recipient command

specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and ~~accepting~~rejecting the electronic

message if the authorized mailhost indicates that the sender address does not exists at the

authorized mailhost.

45. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 44, further comprising accepting the

electronic message if ~~wherein the step of determining whether the sender address exists~~

~~comprises establishing a test connection to~~ the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the

recipient command~~for the sender address, sending a test protocol transaction specifying the~~

~~sender address to the authorized mailhost, and determining if the authorized mailhost~~

~~affirmatively accepts the sender address as a recipient~~.

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46. (canceled)

47. (withdrawn) A method for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the method comprising sending to the remote host a protocol transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

48. (withdrawn) A method for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the method comprising sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

49. (withdrawn) The method of claim 44, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

50. (withdrawn - currently amended) The method of claim 44, wherein the at least one authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain of the sender address.

51. (withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising sending to the authorized a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as

indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

52-53. (canceled)

54. (withdrawn) The method of claim 47, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

55. (withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

56. (withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

57. (withdrawn) The method of claim 48, further comprising rejecting forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

58. (currently amended) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address ~~and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses~~, the system comprising establishing a test connection to ~~an address verification filter determining whether the sender address exists at~~ an authorized mailhost for ~~for a domain of~~ the sender address ~~without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address~~, sending a recipient command specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and ~~accepting~~ rejecting the electronic message if the authorized mailhost indicates that the sender address does not exists at the authorized mailhost.

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59. (previously presented) The system of claim 58, <u>further comprising</u> ~~said address verification filter not~~-accepting the electronic message if the <u>authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the recipient command</u>~~sender address is determined not to exist~~.

60-62. (canceled)

63. (withdrawn) A system for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the system comprising an address verification filter sending to the remote host a protocol transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the protocol transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the protocol transaction.

64. (withdrawn) The system of claim 63, said address verification filter accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the protocol transaction.

65. (withdrawn) A system for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the system comprising an address verifier sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized rejects the first test transaction.

66. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

67. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

68. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, wherein the address verifier comprises an address verification filter that selectively accepts electronic messages having e-mail addresses.

69. (withdrawn) The system of claim 68, said address verifier not accepting electronic messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

70. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, wherein said address verifier rejects forged e-mail addresses submitted to a web site.

71. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, said address verifier classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

72. (withdrawn) The system of claim 65, said address verifier further sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and the second test transaction.

73. (currently amended) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address ~~and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses~~, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored

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thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: establishing a test connection to ~~determining whether the sender address exists at~~ an authorized mailhost for ~~a domain of~~ the sender address ~~without sending an electronic mail message to the sender address~~, sending a recipient command specifying the sender address to the authorized mailhost, and ~~accepting~~ rejecting the electronic message if the authorized mailhost indicates that the sender address does not exists at the authorized mailhost.

74. (previously presented) The article of manufacture of claim 73, further comprising ~~the step of not~~ accepting the electronic message if the authorized mailhost affirmatively accepts the recipient command ~~sender address is determined not to exist~~.

75-77. (canceled)

78. (withdrawn) An article of manufacture for selectively accepting an electronic message having a sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending to the remote host a transaction that might be used to forward mail from an unknown origin, monitoring the remote host response to determine whether the remote host will accept the transaction, and not accepting the electronic message if the remote host accepts the transaction.

79. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 78, further comprising the step of accepting the electronic message if the remote host rejects the transaction.

80. (withdrawn) An article of manufacture for verifying an e-mail address having a domain, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium having stored thereon instructions which, when performed by a processor, cause the processor to execute the steps comprising the steps of: sending a first test transaction specifying the e-mail address to an authorized mailhost for the domain, and classifying the e-mail address as invalid if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

81. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising classifying the e-mail address as valid if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction.

82. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

83. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 80, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same name as the domain.

84. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising the step of not accepting messages specifying the e-mail address if the e-mail address is classified as invalid.

85. (withdrawn) The article of manufacture of claim 80, further comprising sending to the authorized mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is

believed to not exist at the authorized mailhost, classifying the e-mail address as valid if the

authorized mailhost accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction, and

classifying the e-mail address as indeterminate if the authorized mailhost accepts the first test

transaction and the second test transaction.

86. (currently amended) The method of claim 45~~44~~, wherein said <u>recipient command is</u>

~~the test protocol transaction includes a s~~<u>S</u>imple ~~m~~<u>M</u>ail ~~t~~<u>T</u>ransfer ~~p~~<u>P</u>rotocol <u>(SMTP)</u> ~~MAIL~~

~~command and a simple mail transfer protocol~~ RCPT command.

87. (currently amended) The method of claim 86, <u>further comprising a SMTP</u> ~~the~~ MAIL

~~From~~ command ~~specifies~~ <u>specifying</u> a complete e-mail address ~~in the local domain~~.

88. (currently amended) The method of claim 86, <u>further comprising a SMTP command</u>

~~wherein the~~ MAIL ~~From command specifies~~ <u>specifying</u> the null address "<>".

89. (currently amended) The method of claim 86, wherein said ~~determination~~ <u>rejection</u>

is made based upon the authorized mailhost's numeric response to the RCPT command.

90. (currently amended) The method of claim 86, wherein said determination is made

based upon the authorized mailhost's numeric response to a <u>SMTP</u> DATA command.

91. (withdrawn) A method for selectively blocking an electronic message having a

sender address and sent from a remote host to one or more recipient addresses, the method

comprising sending a first test transaction specifying the sender address to an authorized

mailhost for the domain without sending an electronic mail message back to the sender, and

blocking the message if the authorized mailhost rejects the first test transaction.

92. (withdrawn) The method of claim 91, wherein the authorized mailhost is a mail

exchanger host for the domain of the e-mail address.

93. (withdrawn) The method of claim 91, wherein the authorized mailhost has the same

name as the domain.

94. (withdrawn) The method of claim 91, further comprising sending to the authorized

mailhost a second test transaction specifying an arbitrary e-mail address that is believed to not

exist at the authorized mailhost, and accepting the electronic message if the authorized mailhost

accepts the first test transaction and rejects the second test transaction.

95. (withdrawn) The method of claim 94, further comprising neither blocking nor

accepting the message if the authorized mailhost accepts both the first and second test

transactions.

96. (withdrawn) The method of claim 95, further comprising a message quarantine, and

storing the message is said quarantine if the authorized mailhost accepts both the first and second

test transactions.